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# Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 EUR-12 ARA-10 SS-15 NSC-05
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/070 W
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P 261525Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 031

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, CG
SUBJECT: SHABA ATTACK: ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

1. NEWSWEEK COLUMINIST ARNAUD DE BORCHGRAVE HAS CONVEYED TO ME HIS PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS FOLLOWING FIVE-DAY STAY IN KOLWEZI. WHILE THERE HE JOINED FRENCH LEGIONNAIRES IN MOP-UP OPERATIONS AND HAD EXTENSIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH TWO KATANGAN REBELS WHO BECAUSE OF WOUNDS REMAINED AT KOLWEZI HOSPITAL. FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST, MANY OF WHICH DRAWN DIRECTLY FROM KATANGAN PRISONERS, WILL BE INCORPORATED IN STORY DE BORCHGRAVE IS FILING FOR PUBLICATION NEXT WEEK:

2. KATANGAN ATTACKING FORCE TOTALED 3,500, OF WHOM 2,000 WERE DIRECTED AT KOLWEZI AND 1,500 AT OTHER POINTS IN THE SHABA REGION. ABOUT HALF OF THE 2,000 AT KOLWEZI HAD INFILTRATED INTO THE CITY DURING THE PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS.

3. THE MAIN KATANGAN FORCE LEFT ANGOLA MAY 2, TRANSITED ZAMBIA AND ARRIVED AT A POINT SOME 30 KMS. SOUTH OF KOLWEZI ON MAY 12. THEY MARCHED THE REMAINING DISTANCE THROUGH THE NIGHT AND ASSAULTED THE CITY AT DAWN THE FOLLOWING DAY. THE KATANGAN PRISONERS TOLD DE BORCHGRAVE THERE WERE TWO CUBAN AND SIX ANGOLAN ADVISERS (OR TRAINERS) WITH THE FORCE WHEN IT
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STARTED MOVING OUT OF ANGOLA; HOWEVER, NONE OF THESE WERE SEEN AGAIN ONCE THE FORCE REACHED KOLWEZI. LARGE QUANTITIES OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION WERE CACHED IN AND NEAR KOLWEZI PRIOR TO THE ATTACK. MINING COMPANY TRUCKS HAD BEEN USED FOR THIS PURPOSE, AS WELL AS THREE RAILROAD CARS ON A SIDING OUTSIDE THE CITY.

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4. ASSIGNED TO EACH GROUP OF 50 REBELS WAS A KATANGAN "POLITICAL COMMISSAR", WHO HAD BEEN TRAINED IN ANGOLA BY CUBANS AND EAST GERMANS. EACH OF THESE GROUPS WAS ASSIGNED A SPECIFIC SECTOR OF THE CITY TO OCCUPY. GOOD DISCIPLINE WAS MAINTAINED DURING THE FIRST DAY OR TWO. THE KATANGANS HAD STRICT ORDERS NOT TO STEAL FROM INDIVIDUALS, ALTHOUGH LOOTING STORES WAS PERMITTED AS PART OF "DESTROYING THE CAPITALIST STRUCTURE". POLITICAL COMMISSARS ISSUED REQUISTION RECEIPTS TO THOSE FROM WHOM EQUIPMENT, SUCH AS AUTOMOBILES, WAS TAKEN FOR THE REBELS' NEEDS. THESE RECEIPTS WERE OFTEN STAMPED WITH FNLC AND HAMMER/SICKLE EMBLEMS.
THE REBELS HAD ORDERS NOT TO SABOTAGE MINING FACILITIES. EUROPEANS WERE TOLD THEY COULD STAY AND CONTINUE THEIR WORK FOR "THE NEW REVOLUTIONARY STATE"; OTHERWISE TECHNICIANS FROM OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES WOULD BE BROUGHT IN. THE KATANGANS HAD INTENDED TO SET UP A PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT IN KOLWEZI, PRIOR TO TAKING OVER THE COUNTRY. THE RULING COUNCIL OF 20 OFFICIALS WAS TO INCLUDE THREE UNIDENTIFIED BELGIANS AND ONE FRENCH (POSSIBLY EXPATRIATE COLLABORATORS).

5. DISCIPLINE BEGAN TO BREAK DOWN AFTER THE FIRST TWO DAYS, AS TEENAGE REBELS (THE YOUNGEST WAS 13) GOT INTO LIQUOR STOCKS AND THE TEMPTATION MOUNTED TO LOOT EVERYTHING. TERRORISM AND INDISCRIMINATE KILLINGS SPREAD, WITH REPORTS OF AN IMMINENT PARADROP SETTING OFF A ROUND OF PARTICULARLY WILD PILLAGING.
THE KATANGANS BEGAN TO PULL OUT OF KOLWEZI 24 HOURS BEFORE
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THE FIRST FRENCH PARADROP, TAKING WITH THEM SOME 50-60 HOSTAGES.

6. REQUEST DEPT. NOT MAKE PUBLIC USE OF ABOVE INFOR PENDING PUBLICATION OF DE BORCHGRAVE'S STORY.
CUTLER

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